DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 141 991 EC 101 247

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TITLE Parents as Participants, Partners, and Policy-Makers. Chapter 8.
PUB DATE Nov 75
NOTE 57p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$3.50 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Conceptual Schemes; Early Childhood Education; *Handicapped Children; *Models; *Multiply Handicapped; *Parent Participation; *Parent Role; Program Development; *Program Planning

ABSTRACT

Outlined are areas to consider when conceptualizing and planning programs and activities for parents of handicapped children as part of an early education program, and briefly described is a family involvement model for use in a demonstration program for multiply handicapped children. Five major dimensions along which an early education program can address parental needs and offer qualitative experiences are emphasized: providing social and emotional support to and outlets for parents; providing opportunities for information exchange between and among parents, teachers, and other professionals; providing avenues for parents to participate in the program's activities (included here are objectives, suggestions, ideas, and disadvantages relating to starting a parent's club); improving interactions between parents and their children; and developing and improving various marketable skills of parents. The ASTEM (acquaint, teach, support, expand, and maintain) Model is described as a process-oriented model that focuses on bringing family members into contact with a program and then involving them actively and meaningfully in the program. Appended are sample worksheets containing planning questions, statements, and concerns a program planner need consider in developing an early education program. (SBH)

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PARENTS AS PARTICIPANTS, PARTNERS, AND POLICY-MAKERS

An important conclusion that can be drawn about the characteristics of effective programs is that they stimulate, emphasize, and plan for significant input and involvement from parents. There is no doubt that parent and family involvement in early education programs is becoming more and more a recognized and important component of early education efforts. As the numbers of educational programs for young children increased, there was a corollary sensitivity to the need to qualitatively involve parents and other family members in these programs. The reported works of Gray, Karnes, Livenstein, Schaefer, Becker, and countless others substantiate the need to incorporate valiant parent and family involvement.*

During the conceptualization and planning of this component, the program personnel must carefully appraise why it wants parents and other family members to participate in the program. There are three general reasons for family involvement:

- to help oneself
- to help the program
- to help the child

Eventhough any involvement of parents and family members will to some degree serve all three purposes, the family participation activities of various programs do differ greatly in their emphasis on one of the purposes and in their

*Parent involvement is a definite--and non-negotiable--requirement of various funding agencies, i.e., Office of Child Development's Project Head Start, Bureau for Education of the Handicapped, that support early education programs.

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November 1975

EC101247

directness to helping the child.

Each early education administrator must deal very early with the issue of "what service(s) family involvement can provide the progam and what service(s) the program can offer the family." This issue is discussed further in a later section of this chapter (See PROGRAMMING FOR PARENTS: CONCEPTUALIZATION AND PLANNING DIMENSIONS) and in the chapter on SUPPORTIVE SERVICES, Chapter VI.

The particular role parents have played in early education programs has varied from participants to partners to policy-makers. Various programs have enjoyed the input of parents in at least one or a combination of these role categories.

ROLES OF PARENTS/FAMILY MEMBERS

Participants	Partners	Policy-Makers
+paraprofessionals	+programarea directors, i.e., nutrition coordinator, coordinator of field activities, toy collector	+administrators
+teachers		+board members
+volunteers		±co-op members
+resource personnel	+supervisors	+planners and evaluators
+discussion group leaders	+teachers	
+constructionists	+resource personnel	
+maintenance & care personnel	+special events coordinator	
	+committee persons	
	+fund-raisers	
	+community liaison	

Figure A, Roles of Parents/Family Members, shows three categories of

parental relationships with the preschool program: Participants, Partners, Controllers.

> Participants refers to those whose contributions are corollary to the program's philosophy and goals and provide an auxillary service, as a peripheral performer, to the administrative, instructional, or clerical program staffs. This category includes resource personnel, volunteers, passive contributors, i.e., persons who make contributions primarily without attending the school's physical facilities (such as knitting clubs that make items that are forwarded to the school), educational aides, clerical aides, library aides, and interns. This group is usually the largest of the three role categories.
>
> Partners is the category for those participating on a more regular and regulated basis. These are persons who may direct particular components of the program, act as teachers, supervisors, task force members or leaders.
>
> Policy-Makers are members of the policy-setting, decision-making group of the preschool. These are persons who have primary responsibility for the organization, administration, and evaluation of the school and its programs.

The role categories are not exclusive as parents can fluctuate from one category to another. Calvert analyzed the scope of family involvement in early education programs in a report of his review of a large number of program descriptions and his observations of various program practices. He identified six general classes of family member involvement. The classes were:

(1) the family member as teacher-aide, resource personnel, or educator

(2) the family member as planner and policy maker

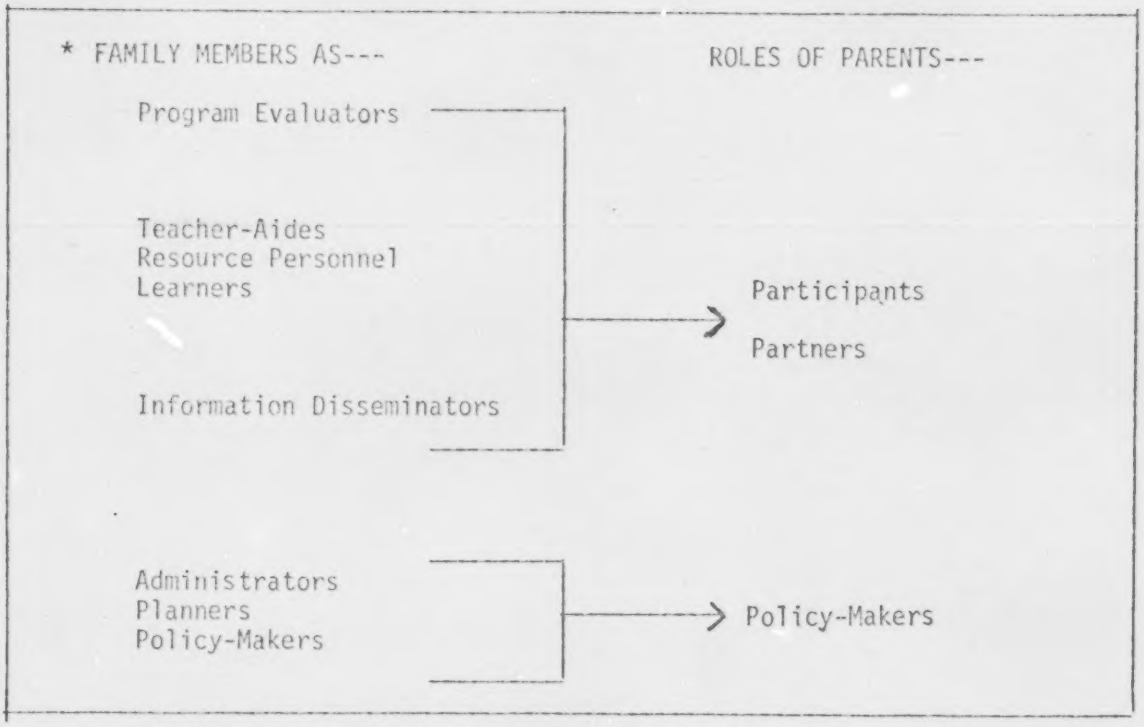
(3) the family as information disseminator

(4) the family member as administrator

(5) the family member as a program evaluator

(6) the family as learner in "how to educate the child(ren)"

The particular nature and scope of the early education program is a significant determiner of the substance of the families' involvement.



The imperative point to be made here is that there must be qualitative parental involvement and that this involvement can assume a variety of forms and dispositions. Whether the involvement is as participants, partners, or controllers, the involvement is to be substantive and important to the goals, objectives, and activities of the early education program. A community, or target group, is less likely to perceive a program as being ineffective or insensitive if the community or its representatives participated in the policy development and decision-making that governed the program's overall operation and organization. The program seriously emphasizing parent education

*Table B - FAMILY MEMBERS - ROLES OF PARENTS, shows how Calvert's characterization can be coordinated with the concept of "Participants, Partners, Controllers"

and involvement components can enhance teacher and administrator effectiveness, along with improved child success.

Regardless of the role(s) parents and family members play, effective involvement means opportunities to participate in decisive and policy-making activities such as the following:

+establishing priorities for resource allocation

+input into the curriculum and the implementation of various program components, i.e., health services, outreach activities

+the employment and evaluation of key personnel

+the recruitment of children

+the development of plans and procedures for using and strengthening the family's role as a highly potent delivery system working in planned concert with the early education program

+the development of innovative organizational, instructional, etc. procedures

Effectiveness is highly related to the program's ability to draw a bond between home and school and to document its impact--or lack of impact.

The early education program must not succumb to what Caldwell refers to as "The School Myth". SCHOOLS is an acronym for Service to Children by a Holy Omniscient, Omnipotent, Loving Staff. SCHOOLS. This self-explanatory philosophy precedes a dissolution of any relationship between the home and school, and encourages the two to become isolated entities. The child, and the early education program, will always benefit when there is good communication and rapport between the school and family members. When a parent or sibling assists in the classroom, on a field trip, or is visible in the

program, the child has the experience of a continued relationship with a significant person of his immediate environment. This can help the child to react positively to supervision by a widening variety of adults. Further, the frequency and quality of family participation can help the early education staff to attain new, different, and innovative ideas, insights, and activities on working with a single child or a group of children that they otherwise may never have encountered. The early education planner, however, must take care that all participation by families, students, community persons, etc., is coordinated, planned, and is in harmony with the program's stated goals and objectives. Participation must be characterized by the qualities of cooperation and orchestrated collaboration but never unnecessary and unproductive confrontation.

In research reported by Gilmer, Miller, and Gray, a general conclusion was that the participation of mothers in the educational activities of their children was associated with greater cognitive gains for target children. Further, in a review of research on infant-mother interactions, Streissguth and Bee concluded that the interaction and teaching style of mothers is very important in shaping a child's early motivation and cognitive functioning. No data, however, seems to conclusively show either the school and teacher or the home and parent as the most predominate factor in a child's academic development. The data does, of course, support supervised and planned activities involving home and school. The development of a viable connection between parents and the early education program is a manifestation of the belief that only cooperative endeavors will produce effective gains in children and improved relationships with parents. During the early years

of life, a large proportion of what the young, developing child learns will occur in the child's home environment. The family, particularly the child's mother or mother surrogate, will be the primary "teacher." This does not change even if the child is enrolled in a substitute care situation, such as a day care center. An early education program must develop a partical and substantive program for parents and family as a major element of its "team of parents, children, and the instructional program" if its efforts are to be more than just a daily routine of activities for children.

PROGRAMMING FOR PARENTS: CONCEPTUALIZATION AND PLANNING DIMENSIONS

When conceptualizing and planning programs and activities for parents, the program planner should be cognizant of at least five dimensions along which an early education program can address parental needs and offer qualitative experiences. The dimensions assume an increased importance if the parent has a handicapped child to whom the program provides service

I. Providing social and emotional support to and outlets for parents. Regularly scheduled meetings of groups of parents discussing various topics and listening to various speakers, are two avenues through which this support can be provided. The program staff must be supportive, demonstrate interest, and show concern for the adult in his/her role as parent, Karnes, Zehrback and Teska view the support dimension of parent programming as "those tasks related to and occuring during the time in which family

members require special emotional, social, or economic support. From these authors' perspective, support should be provided to help the parent and family obtain services from, for example, the Division of Services for Crippled Children, local social welfare agencies, or even to obtain a high school G.E.D. certificate. Regardless of the family's need, the early education program must make a valiant effort to assist the family in obtaining all needed and definable support.

II. Providing opportunities for information exchange between and among parents, teachers, and other professionals, i.e., doctors, lawyers, nutritionists, therapists. Activities in this category can be geared toward

- —providing parents with an understanding of the nature and scope, i.e., goals, objectives, activities, rationale, of their child's program [your program's objectives and activities for their child(ren)]
- —giving parents informative and useful data on child growth and development and practical ways the home can reinforce school activities and objectives
- —providing teachers with information on the child to assist the development of more sensitive educational experiences for their child

The program may also want to provide previews of scheduled events. It is very important that parents receive regular information and have periodic information exchange with the program. Workshops, seminars, and short study sessions on such topics as the following can help to achieve this task:

-teaching your child to count
-improving your child's behavior
-how to stop thumbsucking
-when is it best or not best to spank your child
-sibling rivalry and what it means for your child
-inconsistency of child discipline by mother and father: how it effects child behavior
-improving your child's language development
-motor development in the home
-the kitchen as a diverse and stimulating classroom for your child
-community agencies and how you can use their resources
-picture books and other materials interesting to young children
-what is normal (or abnormal) behavior?
-inexpensive learning materials for your child
-when should you "Parent" and when should you be "a friend"

-things parents do that influence their child's self-concept

-mental retardation: its characteristics and limitations

-adjusting to your child's handicap: mental, emotional, physical

-how you can help your physically handicapped child ajust to obvious limitations

- °the child with an amputation
- °use of prostheses
- °the child with rheumatic fever and a cardiac condition
- °the child with cerebral palsy
- °the child with epilepsy
- °the child with a visual and/or auditory handicap
- °the child with anemia; asthma and allergies; diabetes mellitris; bone and joint conditions
- °the child with neuromuscular conditions
- °the child with congenital deformities

-community and state-supported services for the mentally, emotionally, and physically handicapped

-questions to ask the physician during the comprehensive examination

-when is a behavior a problem and in which ways can you handle it with your child

-is your child's behavioral problem in him or around him

- °are you your child's problem

-recreational games and activities for the handicapped child

-ways to modify traditional children's games for participation by handicapped children

-helping other family members adjust to a handicapped child

-using facilities and equipment designed for handicapped children

There are just a few of a huge number of items a program may want to use.

In the planning and preparation of information exchange between and among parents, teachers, and professionals, the early education program staff should be aware of certain practical guidelines borne from direct experiences of professionals in the field. Since one of the goals of teachers and administrators is to maximize the worth of various interactions these guidelines can be helpful.

A. Group Meetings. The most successful group meetings are characterized by and use such as the following to promote parental involvement:

(1) there should be parent involvement in the selection of topics, speakers, and the identification of meeting dates, and sites

(2) the meetings should be scheduled no more than once monthly

(3) the notification of meetings should occur through the use of several media, i.e., written notes, telephone calls, newspaper notices, radio announcements. Timing is critical; the notices must be given far enough in advance to allow the necessary pre-planning.

(4) audio-visual aids should be used to complement and strengthen discussions, speakers, and group work

(5) make arrangements for baby sitting at the site of the meeting to alleviate this burden on parents

(6) organize car pools or other transportation arrangements

(7) involve parents in committee work particularly the work that's designed to support parental group activities and other components of the early education program

(8) try to insure a friendly, but not imposing, atmosphere. The atmosphere increases the likelihood of parents returning to future meetings.

(9) remember to avoid the solicitation of funds during parent meetings

Following the group meeting, the early education staff (or teacher) should record the names of those in attendance and any pertinent observations or remarks made by parents that will enable the program to gain more insight into the needs of individual parents and their child(ren). Following the above suggestions, the program should become better equipped to guide the parents into acitivities that match the needs of individuals. The early education program staff should not assume that the parents who were not at the meeting are disinterested in their child(ren) and are unwilling to become involved with the school. Rather, the program should begin to gather information from available sources

that will help it plan to reach non-attending parents through a more attractive and need-meeting perspective.

B. Small Group Meetings. These are meetings composed of ten or less persons who have similar needs, i.e., parents whose children have a common handicap or learning problem. Procedures that can enhance the success and assure attendance at small group meetings are

(1) schedule meetings as often as once weekly or bi-monthly

(2) the topics for discussion to be selected by parents; responsibilities for planning and conducting meetings and gatherings should be rotated

(3) give attention to the individual needs of the group as well as individual group members

(4) the meetings' content must be challenging yet on a level where comprehension, participation, and assimilation are possible for all participants

(5) the social amenities such as dress and language should be compatible with the group's needs

(6) the atmosphere is to be characterized by informality and levity, but with a goal or task orientation

(7) the teacher must participate but not be dominant or condescending. A first name basis for interacting may be appropriate for one locale and inappropriate for another. Be sensitive to this fact.

(8) allow the small group setting to offer an opportunity to plan ways of helping new parents or reluctant participants to become involved in activities suited to their needs. Focusing the group on this kind of problem enhances its cohesiveness.

(9) the meetings should be held for definite, predetermined periods of time, usually not exceeding two hours.

(10) the early education staff should be ready to act as passive facilitators, if necessary, to insure that the group's goals and objectives are geared in a manner to meet individual and group needs

(11) The teacher is to be sensitive to the need for changes and provide necessary support and guidance, and should view such changes as growth.

III. Providing avenues for parents to participate in the program's activities. It cannot be over emphasized

that (1) there is a natural closeness of young children to their parents and (2) that a good center plans for the parents' coordinated input and participation. To be effective a program must welcome the family to observe activities, discuss policies, make suggestions and actively participate in class activities, field trips, etc. Programs are encouraged to make use of any special skills evident in the parent group.

It is a true but somewhat unfortunate fact that many parents

- -do not have the time to participate in the activities of the early education program
- -do not have the desire to participate, or
- -do not have the economic or material means to participate at a level they think is necessary

Because of the immense importance of a viable home-school relationship, the program is obligated to implement various kinds of activities geared to raising the parents' consciousness and stimulating them to involvement. Following are suggestions on how some programs stimulate parents toward participation and involvement.

A. From time to time place a table near the front door where the parent cannot help

but see it upon arrival or departure. Put materials on this table that beg for immediate, but simple, attention and participation. A sign may read:

+STAY A WHILE AND HELP YOUR CHILD SOLVE ONE OF THESE NEW PUZZLES

+STOP AND HELP YOUR CHILD MAKE A FUNNY HAT FOR THE PARADE

+HELP YOUR CHILD MAKE/DRAW A CAR, DOG, HOUSE, TURKEY, ETC., WITH HIS/HER CRAYONS

+SIGN YOUR NAME BELOW YOUR CHILD'S NAME

B. Put up a large mural inside the entrance to the school with paints, brushes, collage materials, and so forth, to be added to by parents when they bring or pick up their child. On some days there may be a sign at the mural that reads "FOR DADDIES AND THEIR CHILDREN ONLY," or "FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR BROTHERS ONLY" (OR SISTERS, ETC.)".

C. Make the facilities available as meeting sites. Mothers can be encouraged to organize various hobby, study, or social groups to meet at the school. Such groups as sewing clubs, cultural or gourmet cooking

groups, or item exchange clubs are ideas. The role of the program administrator is to support these groups by helping them organize, sending out notices, providing meeting places and, when necessary, finding a parent to provide leadership. If no such parent is available, the administrator can either try to find an interested and willing leader from the larger community or may want to serve as an acting group leader herself.

D. It is more difficult to promote interaction with parents who work, but their involvement is perhaps even more important than others to the child's maximum development, and to the child's wholesome feelings of love, security, and affiliation with the overall family unit. Evening meetings with a speaker are sometimes considered a chore for working parents, and as a result must be given some thought as an instrument of involvement. Mealtime activities with food and drink provided by the program can be the most appreciated and the most attended. Throughout the year a series of breakfasts, lunches, dinner, activity sessions,

and picnics can be scheduled--sometimes for the whole family, sometimes only for fathers and their children, and sometimes only for mothers and their children. Varying combinations can be used. The breakfasts, picnics, and dinners are to be timed to accommodate the hours and needs of the majority of working parents.

E. Parents' Bulletin Board. Set an area aside for a parent's bulletin board. Select a spot where the parents can easily see it as they enter or leave the school, such as just above the children's sign-in sheet or in the parent's meeting room. Here are a few suggestions for the board:

+Newspaper clippings about children, education, and family life

+Photographs from newspapers and magazines that would be of interest to the parents of young children

+Cartoons on the subjects of children, teachers, schools, and family life

+Individual and group photographs of the children performing various tasks, duties, playing games, or simply posing

+Helpful hints such as the following: "Put a small mark with a pencil or a piece of adhesive tape inside the right hee of each pair of your child's shoes to help him learn the difference between left and right."

+School calendar. A running list of the various happenings of the school week.

+Classroom sayings. Keep one little section for mounting an ever-changing collection of "cute sayings" by the children and family members.

+Curriculum charts. Be sure to keep these posted where parents can see them readily. You might place a checkmark next to an item when your class has finished it. This gives interested parents a quick overview of the kinds of curriculum happenings that have been going on.

+You can also post the following items on the bulletin board: official thank-you notices to parents who help in various ways; List of children's names and addresses for use by parents who want to get addresses for birthday invitations; List of car pools; Announcements of educational meetings and conferences at

which the program will have representation; Any special announcement for your children's parents--such as items to bring for craft projects, procedures for signing-out, and so forth. In addition to the "special items posted each week, be sure to always post a copy of the general schedule (school calendar) the program follows and copies of the curriculum charts or formats used. This will give the parents an idea of the different areas the early education program covers.

F. Send newsletters to each parent describing "what's going on in school".

G. The organization of a parent's club. An officially organized parents' club can be a valuable method of involving the parents in the operation of the program and the education of their children. Many programs use the parents' club as a method of handling the parent education meetings. This is based on the assumption that if parents plan their own meetings and programs they will be more likely to support them.

1. Some Program Objectives for a Parent's Club

   (a) To inform and involve the parents in the early education program.

   (b) To educate the parents concerning the school's curriculum and child-rearing techniques

   (c) To describe the importance of the parental role.

   (d) To increase communication between the home and program.

   (e) To provide an opportunity for parents with common concerns to meet with each other and share experiences.

   (f) To provide a forum within which friendships among parents can develop.

   (g) To raise funds for special projects.

2. Disadvantages of a Parents' Club. The early education program must be aware of certain pitfalls.

   (a) If the early education administrator is weak and unsure of his role, the parents can become strong enough to cause conflicts between the staff, the parents, and others.

   (b) If the chairman of the Parents' Club is not strong and active, then the program

administrator may have to take on the chairman's responsibilities, which increases the program administrator's workload.

(c) The Parents' Club may plan activities but leave the details to the program to handle. The early education program and the parents must be careful and considerate in the assignment and acceptance of responsibilities.

(d) Unless the responsibilities of the early education program director and Parents' Club chairman are well defined, there may be unnecessary and frustrating duplication of work.

3. Suggestions on How to Start a Parents' Club

(a) Obtain permission, if necessary, to start a Parents' Club from the board of directors, advisory board, sponsoring or funding agency.

(b) Find out if the parents are interested in such an organization by means of telephone, mail, home visits, personal contacts.

(c) If the response to the inquiry is sufficient,

organize a committee of interested parents to plan for the organization of the club.

(d) Set the time for the planning committee meeting and inform the committee members.

(e) Plan the agenda for the meeting. The agenda can include such items as these -

+Selection of a Planning Committee Chairman

+Developing objectives for the club

+Planning for the selection of the club's chairman

+Determining how to present the club plan to the other parents

4. Ideas for a Parents' Club. The program may want to initially suggest some possible activities and ideas for the parents. These are some possibilities.

(a) Work parties to repair and build equipment

(b) Family picnics, dances, parties, and shows to get better acquainted -

(c) Fund raising projects for scholarships, extra equipment, speakers, outings, etc.

(d) Art fair; Athletic events between and/or among husbands, wives, or both

(e) Bake sale; Rummage Sales

(f) Community open house with invitations to the surrounding area and other preschool programs

5. Ideas for a Parent's Club. The program may want to initially suggest some possible activities and ideas to the parents. These are some possibilities.

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   (d) Art fair; Athletic events between and/or among husbands, wives, or both

   (e) Bake sale; Rummage sales

   (f) Community open house with invitations to the surrounding area and other preschool programs

   (g) Parent education meetings

   (h) Parent study groups

   (i) Field trips

   (j) Baby-sitting exchange between parents

   (k) Children's clothing exchange

   (l) Encounter groups

   (m) Dramatic presentations

H. Another helpful suggestion is provided by West (1974) who described a three-day activity conducted at the Vassar College Laboratory Nursery School. This activity was called a "doing museum" and was devoted to providing program and non-program parents and their children the opportunity "to use and expand their inborn sense of wonder through a science open house." It allowed children and

adults together to learn by active exploration, by looking, listening, feeling, smelling and experimenting. This project at Vassat was a cooperative venture between the nursery school director and teachers and parents. The former supplied ideas, organizational responsibility, materials, and equipment for the exhibits. The parents added their ideas, materials, and supervised the activities of the open house. West reports that kindergarten classes and groups from day care and pre-kindergarten centers were invited with their teachers from other preschool programs and early elementary grades visited.

IV. Improving interactions between parents and their children. The program's efforts to improve the quality of interactions and interrelationships between parents and their children is influenced by the above three dimensions. This dimension, however, is concerned more directly with helping parents become better rearers of their children. Although the others contribute to this dimension, neither totally consumes this particular dimension.

A. An important objective of programs attempting to improve interactions is to attune the parents to the various kinds of child needs that are often non-physical. Young children will express psychological, social, and emotional needs that parents may misidentify as inappropriate or undesirable behaviors. The early education program must

recognize the tendency toward misidentification as a potentially inhibiting barrier to improved parent-child interactions, and it must make preparations to address this issue if it should fall within its realm of responsiblity.

B. A program can further facilitate and enchance the quality of interactions by providing meaningful opportunities for parents to develop skills in-

+child-rearing procedures. Seminars, parent-training meetings, use of expert resource personnel, observations of good, bad, and inappropriate parental behavior can be used.

+promoting healthy social and emotional development. Such avenues as the following can be used: discussions with resource personnel and teachers on the nature and structure of self-image, inferiorty complexes, identifying and meeting various physical, social, and emotional needs of children, and child growth and development;

+making everyday experiences meaningful and exciting to children. Each day is filled with new and innovative encounters that can stimulate the child's already inquisitive concern of his environment. Children can miss a large part of the excitement of "growing up" when significant adults don't make use of each day's encounters in their interactions with

their children.

+stimulating language and conceptual development. Meaningful communication between parent and child is a first step to the child's optimalization of his potential. Parents can learn child questioning procedures that help children develop concepts and ideas. The clinical interview technique of Piaget can be described and demonstrated to parents as a procedure to stimulate language use and development of ideas and concepts. Parents are to be encouraged toward greater communication and shown how that communication can be achieved.

+utilizing the range of resources and attractions of the community to stimulate and widen the child's learning and experimental environment(s). The extent to which man can accurately make decisions, judge the relative worth of competing alternatives, and interpret and accommodate data is influenced by the quantity and quality of his meaningful experiences. The more vast and qualitative the individual's background the better will be his understanding of his day-to-day encounters. These statements can be applied to the development of children. The greater a child's meaningful experiences the greater is his potential for understanding the various environmental stimuli he encounters. The variety of significant

experiences also influences conceptual development, social adjustment, and the child's self-concept. Using community resources to stimulate and improve learning is a factor of child growth and development that must not be overlooked in constructing or evaluating programs for parents.

V. Developing and Improving Various Marketable Skills of Parents. Some early education programs incorporate this dimension in their activities for parents. This dimension usually involves the assignment or enlistment of interested parents as teacher-aides and interns. Under supervision, parents act as teacher-aides gaining experience and skills in the planning and conduct of instructing young children. After a period of time they may assume full positions as aides or teachers. This kind of action is seen most in those programs whose funding requirements necessitate that a percentage of parents be employed as significant members of the total program. This dimension can also be expressed when the program allows its facilities, equipment, etc. to be used as a training site by an outside agency or organization, during non-school hours, for the benefit of the parents of the program's enrolled children. Tailoring classes, shorthand classes, barbering classes, foreign language classes, real estate-oriented seminars, tax preparation courses are just a few examples of how the program can

actualize this dimension. These classes may be organized, administered, and conducted by program or non-program persons. The significant point is that the early education program initiate such an activity or respond to the parents' request for such an activity.

In an OCD Newsletter, published as an information service by Project Head Start, a Head Start parent and employee recounts the role the program played in improving her marketable skills:

WHAT HEAD START MEANS TO ME.....

> Since 1966, I have been a teacher with the Institute of Community Services Head Start program. When this program first came to Oxford, it was really unbelievable that you could send your child to Head Start all day without paying for a babysitter or sending food. My four children attended the program and were given a physical examination and their teeth were fixed. Since I work for the program, I got my GED certificate and I went to Rust College to receive an Associate degree under the Supplementary Training program. This encouraged my husband to go on and get his GED. He got a better job working as a parcel postman. During this time we started to save as much as we could. We bought a three-room house. Later we bought two and half acres of land out in the country and last year we had our own house built.
>
> Head Start really improved my life, educationally and academically, and it also helped me in rearing my own girls. I really think the whole community is being helped by Head Start.
>
> A teacher from Holly Spring, Mississippi

THE ATSEM PARADIGM AS A CONCEPTUALIZATION AND PLANNING INSTRUMENT

Karnes and associates have proposed a conceptualization and planning desi
design to assist program planners. Karnes, Zehrbach, and Teska developed a family involvement model for use in a demonstration program for multi-handicapped children.* The model is called ATSEM. It derives its label from

*The program is called the Precise Early Education of Children with Handicaps--PEECH- at the Insitute for Research on Exceptional Children, University of Illinois.

the initials of the five main areas: (A)cquaint, (T)each, (S)upport, (E)xpand, and (M)aintain. The ATSEM model is a process-oriented model that focuses on bringing family members into contact with a program and then involving them actively and meaningfully in the program. The following chart shows a graphical portrait of the ATSEM model for parent involvement.

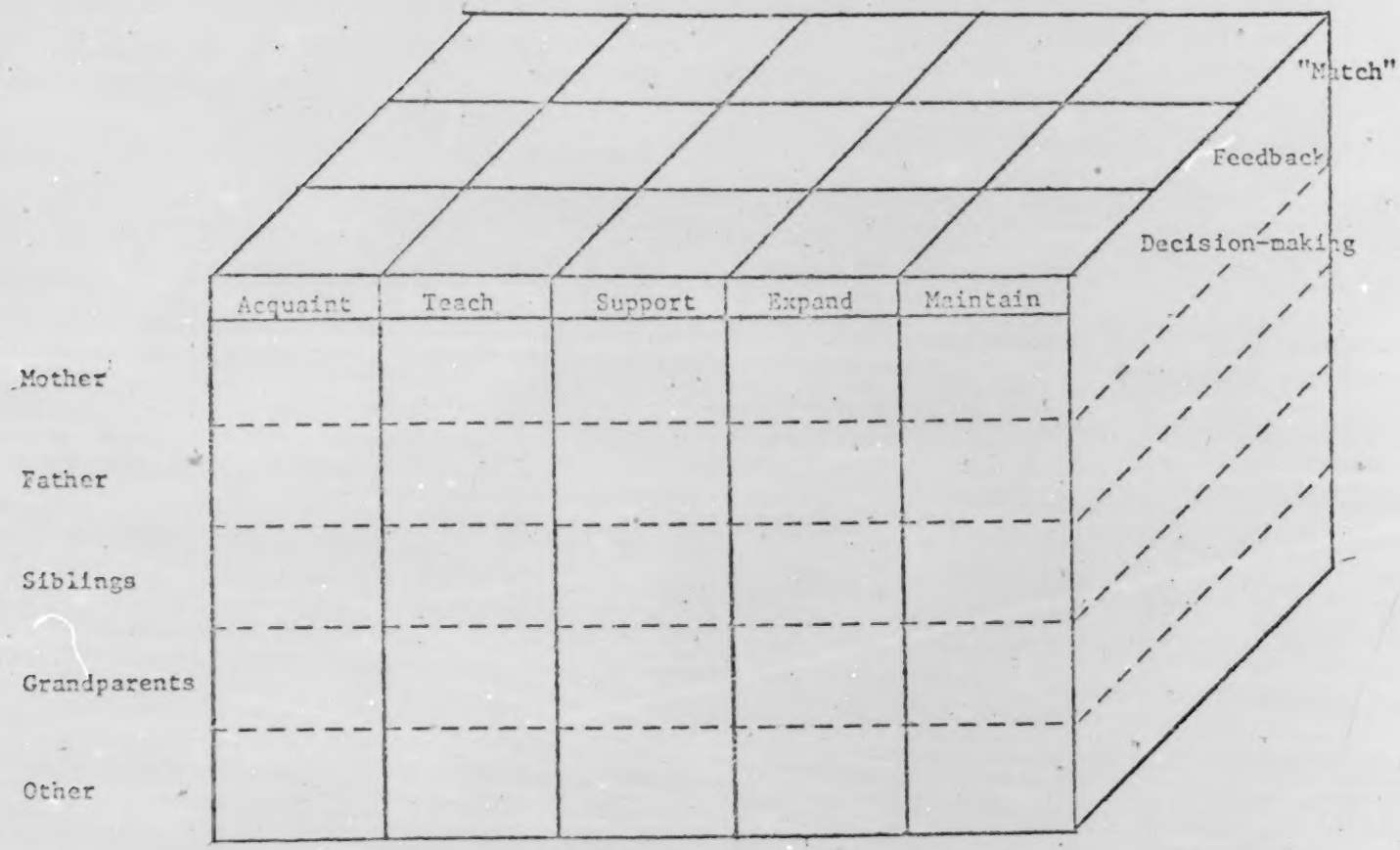
The ATSEM model is designed to help the program plan the in corporation of mothers, fathers, siblings, and other relations in the program. The "Acquaint" phase deals with the process of involving family members in program activities designed to maximize the growth of the child at home and at school. The "Teach" phase is also viewed as a process. During the process, the family member learns a set of techniques, skills, and attitudes that helps the family member(s) with concrete tasks to teach the child until the parent or family member learns how to teach concepts without help. This phase is considered completed when those involved have showned the ability to approach the child and teach him new concepts and ideas with little direction from others. "Support" is the third phase of the model. This component includes that period of time during which the family member requires special support of an emotional, social, or economic nature. Thus, the program's "support" activities may help the parent learn how to obtain services from the Division of Services for Crippled Children, to finish a high school General Education Development Test [G.E.D.], or to increase knowledge of the areas economic or political structure. The "Expand" stage of the model is entered when the parents feel secure enough to increase the child's cognitive and experiential knowledge, skills, activities, and encounters. Once it is apparent the parent can demonstrate that they can consistently expand the child's knowledge and skills, it seems appropriate to focus on

procedures that will maintain such behavior. The "Maintain" phase of the model is multi-faceted. It involves the provision of various reinforcement to parents who have made considerable progress in working with their children to assist them to maintain this high level of functioning. This phase also assists parents to "Acquaint" other parents with the program. Helping others understand the program is a useful procedure to crystalize one's own interpretation of the program.

The dimension of the ATSEM model that shows how parents/family members can be involved as participants in the on-going process has three areas: decision-making, feedback, and match. Parents can participate in decision-making on various issues in a variety of ways, some of which we have discussed previously. Feedback refers to receiving information on the effectiveness or uneffectiveness of planned activities so as to improve future planning and decision-making. Match involves the area of appropriately developing a cohesive relationship between the child's development and the curriculum in which he functions. It also involves matching parental goals and values with the program's.

These various phases need not be conducted in the order in which they are presented here. To be effective the program director(s) and staff must get to know the parents and families of its enrolled children. Using the information from person-to-person / face-to-face communication obtained within a sincere framework can form the basis of an effective program of experiences for parents and other family members.

Figure 1. The ATSEM model for parent involvement.



Procedures used to implement ATSEM dimension:

1. Home visit
   a. Observe parent-child interaction
   b. Teach
2. School
   a. Parent observe child
   b. Teach
3. Parent discussion groups
4. Personal interview
5. Therapy
6. Cassette tapes
7. Toy library

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CONCEPTUALIZATION AND PLANNING WORKSHEETS

Set No. 7

PARENTS AS PARTICIPANTS, PARTNERS, AND POLICY-MAKERS

Project Name_____

Your Name_____

Date_____

INTRODUCTION

The following worksheets are composed of various "conceptualization and planning" questions, statements, and concerns a program planner would need to address if the early education program is to be well conceptualized and logically planned. These questions, etc. are designed to assist program planners, researchers, and any other pertinent personnel to critically analyze and give serious thought to the nature and scope of their program's intents, needs, procedures, and overall structure and substance. For those programs in the early developmental stages, the worksheets can help in the early program planning and staff training tasks; for those older programs, the worksheets can assist in process evaluation -- or middle of the road decision-making, in-service training and summative evaluation needs. (A program's unique situation and circumstances can illuminate other productive uses.)

For the best results, please give each item serious attention and thought, then respond as directly as possible.

Worksheet No._____

HOW DOES YOUR PROGRAM RESPOND
TO THESE IMPERATIVE ISSUES?

IMPERATIVE ISSUES, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

List those staff titles who've responsibility for

(1) planning and organizing the parent component
(2) conducting and implementing this component, and
(3) evaluating the parent component

YOUR PROGRAM RESPONSES

Staff responsible for planning/organizing tasks._____

Staff responsible for implementation._____

Staff responsible for evaluation tasks._____

Describe the behavioral responsibilities of the personnel identified above (itemize and present each staff title individually).

Job Descriptions.

1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____
5._____
6._____
7._____

Worksheet No.____

HOW DOES YOUR PROGRAM RESPOND
TO THESE IMPERATIVE ISSUES?

IMPERATIVE QUESTIONS, ISSUES, CONCERNS

ASSESSING THE NEEDS OF PARENTS/ ACCOUNTABILITY
TO PARENTS/RESPONDING TO PARENTAL NEEDS

Your program will want to identify ways it can help or provide services to parents of enrolled children. Describe how your program will identify needs of parents?

The program's accountability to the parents is an indicator of how definite and specific it will address needs of parents . Describe your program's level of accountability regarding the extent of its provision of services to parents. How accountable is the program to parents?

YOUR PROGRAM'S RESPONES

Assessing the needs of parents.

Program Accountability to Parents/Family Members.

HOW DOES YOUR PROGRAM RESPOND
TO THESE IMPERATIVE ISSUES?

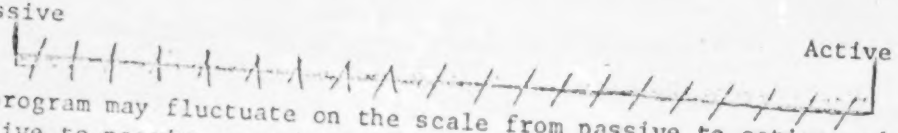
Worksheet No. _____

IMPERATIVE QUESTIONS, ISSUES, CONCERNS

In accordance with your program's level of accountability, to what extent or how will your program react to those needs it identifies? What will be the program's disposition toward passive or active assistance? [See examples below]

Passive Reactions to Needs	Active Reactions to Needs
-provide information about available resources, agencies, etc., parents may contact themselves.	-provide information and will act as an intermediary, spokesman, and/or publicly advocate for the parents and family
-recommends that parents complete GED requirements, and identifies avenues and pertinent persons, requirements, resources, etc., and informs parents and/or family members.	-recommends completion of GED and conducts weekly or monthly GED - facisimile courses to help and prepare parents.

Passive



Active

A program may fluctuate on the scale from passive to active and active to passive or mobilize toward the center. Factors that determine a program's position are (1) the parental need(s) (2) services necessary to adequately meet that need (3) the feelings, and motivations of parents (4) the resources and constraints of the program, (5) the socio-political factors related to the need, the environment, etc., (6) the goals, objectives, philosophy of staff and program.

YOUR PROGRAM'S RESPONSES

Responding to Parental Needs. _____

Worksheet No._____

HOW DOES YOUR PROGRAM RESPOND TO THESE IMPERATIVE ISSUES?

Imperative Questions, Issues, Concerns

A well conceptualized parent program component addresses, at least, those conceptualization and planning categories named in Figure 1 - Conceptualization and Planning Dimensions of Parent Programs. Your initial task here is to list at least three objectives and activities your program can accomplish in each category. Serious involvement of parents/families in the child's early education program through the consideration of C & P dimensions can lead to effective and improved services.

Your Program's Responses

Providing Social & Emotional Support
1._____
2._____
3._____

Information Exchange between/among Parents, Teachers, Professional/Medical Personnel
1._____
2._____
3._____

Parent Participation
1._____
2._____
3._____

Improving Parent-Child Interactions
1._____
2._____
3._____

Developing/Improving Marketable Skills
1._____
2._____

FIGURE 1

CONCEPTUALIZATION AND PLANNING DIMENSIONS
OF PARENT PROGRAMS

PROVIDING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT TO PARENTS

PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION BETWEEN AND AMONG THEMSELVES AND OTHERS

PLANNING FOR PARENT PARTICIPATION IN THE EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM

IMPROVING PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS

DEVELOPING AND/OR IMPROVING MARKETABLE SKILLS OF PARENTS

Worksheet No._____

HOW DOES YOUR PROGRAM RESPOND TO THESE IMPERATIVE ISSUES?

Imperative Questions, Issues, Concerns	Your Program's Responses
In determining the nature and scope of your program's parent involvement component, respond to the following questions:	
Who among family members will your program actively involve?	Who will be involved?_____
What will be the nature of their involvement in your program?	What's the nature of their general involvement?_____
Why will they be participating in your program? What is the rationale for their involvement?	Why will they be participating?_____
When will your program begin to involve them?	When will they become involved?_____
Where will this participation and involvement take place?	Where will involvement take place?_____
How will your program initiate contact with families and describe the benefits of involvement and association in your program?	How will contact be initiated?_____

HOW DOES YOUR PROGRAM RESPOND TO THESE IMPERATIVE ISSUES?

Worksheet No. _____

IMPERATIVE ISSUES, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

Parents and family members have expectations of your program. The quality and number of these expectations can determine the extent of their involvement in the early education program. Early in the operation of the program arrangements must be made to hear their expectations; these expectations may have to be clarified, and possibly, re-vamped. What are your program's plans for (1) identifying the expectations of parents/family members (2) differentiating between real and unrealistic expectations, and (3) informing parents/family members of the programs philosophy, goals, objectives, and planned activities for their children?

YOUR PROGRAM'S RESPONSES

Clarifying Expectations. _____

To what extent will your program insure that there is significant--numerically visible--parent representation in the three role categories--Participants, Partners, and Policy-Makers? What will your program do to obtain representation in these roles?

Participants. _____

Partners. _____

Policy-Makers. _____

Worksheet No._____

HOW DOES YOUR PROGRAM RESPOND
TO THESE IMPERATIVE ISSUES?

IMPERATIVE ISSUES, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

List at least ten decisions your program would want to make regarding the total parent component, i.e., effectiveness, ineffectiveness of the component, its organization, structure, its methodology. At the year's end, what kind of judgements do you intend to make about the parent program?

How has your program organized itself to collect and analyze the appropriate information on which the above decisions will be based?

How often does [or will] your program officially have parents viewing their children in instructional settings? What plans have been [or will be] implemented to insure that parents have the opportunity to visit and view instruction?

YOUR PROGRAM'S RESPONSES

Decisions to be made about parent program compo

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

Data Collection Procedures:_____

Parents Viewing Instructional Process._____

NOTES - PARENTS AS PARTICIPANTS, PARTNERS, POLICY-MAKERS